Saying no without guilt

For the woman who says yes before she has checked what she has left to give. This sheet gives you a pause, a few words to use, and a way to sit with the guilt afterwards.

You are not the only one

In this episode Humera tells a story from her own life. She worked so hard hosting a gathering that she ended the night with a fever, unable to sit with her own guests. What she learned, slowly, was that giving without boundaries is not generosity. It is depletion dressed as virtue. She gives again now, with her eyes open.

Season 3, Episode 24: The woman who gave until she broke

The skill, in small steps

1. **Pause before you answer.** "Let me check and get back to you" is a complete sentence.
2. **Check three things.** Do I have the time, the energy and the willingness? If one is missing, the honest answer is no, or not this time.
3. **Say it kindly and briefly.** "I can't take that on, but I hope it goes well." You do not owe a long explanation.
4. **Expect the guilt, and let it pass.** The guilt is an old habit, not proof that you did wrong. You do not have to undo your answer to make it stop.

Your turn

Something I said yes to, and wished I had not:

The words I will use next time:

What I want to keep my energy for:

لَا يُكَلِّفُ ٱللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا

"Allāh does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity."

Al-Baqarah 2:286 (part of the verse) · Quran.com

If saying no to someone could put you or your children in danger, this sheet is not the right tool. Please go to Get help now.

Shared for comfort and reflection by women who have been there. Not therapy, counselling or medical advice. In crisis? Call 911, or the Naseeha Helpline at 1-866-627-3342, any hour.